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ABSTRACT

In November 1995, Missouri's St. Louis Community College established a task force to reevaluate the role of the general education (GE) curriculum and recommend an appropriate curriculum design. This final report summarizes the efforts and results of the task force. Following lists of task force and subcommittee members, an introduction reviews current ideas regarding the nature and purpose of GE and the college's existing GE program. A schedule of task force activities is then presented for November 1995 to September 1997 and beyond and the four stages used by the task force to develop a new GE proposal are described. The next sections indicate that the task force chose the core curriculum as the paradigm for reform efforts and review issues related to designing GE courses; developing a GE review board; and dealing with developmental education, transfer students, and career students in the proposed core curriculum. Next, the procedure determined by the task force for developing new courses is discussed and an assessment plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum is described. Finally, the recommended core curriculum and the knowledge areas, skill areas, and skill area outcomes developed by the task force are presented. Contains 13 references. The task force reading list and a plan for implementing the curriculum are appended. (TGI)

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ED 409 932

INTEGRITY IN LIBERAL LEARNING

A CORE CURRICULUM FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The Final Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform

St. Louis Community College
St. Louis, Missouri

June 10, 1997

JC 970 396

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I. P. McPhail

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"Work is love made visible"

Kahlil Gibran
The Prophet

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INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, general education reform has been a critical institutional priority for America's colleges. The current wave of general education reform has been profoundly influenced by three seemingly disparate projects: Harvard's Report on the Core Curriculum (Harvard Committee, 1978), an update on the perennial quest for the liberally well-educated person; Miami-Dade's curriculum reform initiative, General Education in a Changing Society (Lukenbill & McCabe, 1978), aimed at making community college education count for something, while also being accountable; and Boyer and Levine's, A Quest for Common Learning, which reminds us of our common humanity and the ties that bind people who are outwardly different.

Higginbottom (1995) captures the thinking of the above and other influential theorists and publicists of the contemporary reform effort as follows:

> What has inspired the work of these thinkers and curriculum reformers is the conviction that undergraduate education ought to be purposeful and edifying and that a portion of it ought to provide the grounding for broadly inclusive civic conversation. College educators, they argue, should define clearly and justify to each other what is essential to a college education, as well as prescribe a common set of learning objectives encompassing knowledge, cognitive and performance capabilities, the capacity for moral judgment, and dispositions of intellect and temperament. Furthermore, these learning goals should have a practical purport, enabling generally educated graduates to cope successfully with the myriad challenges of contemporary living and, in particular, with the requirements of competent, participative citizenship.
>
> Although these contemporary reformers have advocated a more coherent general education for all levels of postsecondary education, each has acknowledged that the collision of perspectives and interests within and among diverse institutions would precipitate a variety of objectives and curricular content. Universities, for example, influenced by graduate school values and faculty research interests, would most likely favor a general education plan based upon established academic disciplines and their unique modes of intellectual inquiry. Liberal arts colleges, presumably more student-centered, would have greater latitude in certifying general education courses according to broadly shared criteria or in experimenting with thematic cross-disciplinary offerings. The most pragmatic of postsecondary institutions,

> community colleges would need to balance the interests of occupational and transfer-oriented curricula and faculty, lest general education goals be too abstract or, worse, misappropriated in the service of a narrow vocationalism. (pp. 89-90)

Perhaps the most sustained reform effort of general education inquiry to date has been that of Jerry Gaff. In two significant books (Gaff, 1983, 1991), as editor of the GEM Newsletter (Gaff, 1979-1982), and as Vice President and Director of the Project on Strong Foundations for General Education at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 1994), he reported on trends in general education reform, finding that it had become a total programmatic undertaking permeating all aspects of postsecondary education. Gaff acknowledged that although the various pressures of the academic culture "conspire to whittle down good ideas that call for significant change from the status quo" (Gaff, 1991, p. 77), there were good reasons to persist with a reform agenda in light of survey responses that show large increases in favorable attitudes toward general education by both faculty and administrators as a consequence of reform efforts.

Gaff concludes the following:

> Indeed, a new concept of general education seems to be emerging at a large number of institutions that have analyzed undergraduate education. The old idea equated general education with breadth and, in an institution organized around academic departments, involved a sampling of courses from the broad array of academic disciplines. The method of securing breadth was by means of distribution requirements, and students were typically given a great deal of latitude to choose among alternative courses within broad domains of knowledge, such as the humanities, social, and natural sciences. Usually all courses designated by a department, typically introductory or lower level ones, met the requirements. These courses were regarded as a "foundation" on which specialized study would build. Such a program required little administrative coordination, simply a registrar to verify that requirements were met. Faculty members tended to view teaching such courses as "service" to students who were concentrating in other fields, and students were advised to "get your distribution requirements out of the way, so you can get on with more important work in your major." Each of these elements is part of an old, and increasingly discredited, way of thinking about general education.

A new concept is emerging from conversations among faculties about the qualities of an educated person and the redesign of their curricula. One after another, college faculties are concluding that general education must be much more than breadth and simple exposure to different fields of study. Collectively, they are deciding that students should:

- receive a generous orientation to the intellectual expectations, curricular rationale, and learning resources of the institution;
- acquire specific skills of thought and expression, such as critical thinking and writing, that should be learned "across the curriculum" and imbedded within several courses;
- learn about another culture and the diversity that exists within our own culture in terms of gender, race, ethnic background, class, age, and religion;
- integrate ideas from across disciplines to illuminate interdisciplinary themes, issues, or social problems;
- study some subjects – beyond their majors – at advanced, not just introductory, levels;
- have an opportunity near the end of their course of study to pull together their learning in a senior seminar or project; and
- experience a coherent course of study, one that is more than the sum of its parts.

Surely, study of various disciplines is important, but this increasingly is seen as a minimalist definition that is not sufficiently rigorous for the demands that students will face in their lifetimes. A more robust concept is needed to raise the quality, stature, and frankly, the value of general education. (pp. ii-iv)

GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM AT ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The currently existing general education program at St. Louis Community College, a classic distribution paradigm, is organized as follows (St. Louis Community College, 1996-97):

Missouri General Education Requirements

Students who complete the following requirements will have noted on their transcripts *Missouri General Education Requirements* completed. Students who achieve this certification will have satisfied all general education requirements of any Missouri public college or university to which they transfer.

St. Louis Community College General Education Requirements

A minimum total of 39 credit hours is required from the following courses:

Communications

Choose three courses, two from Group 1 and one from Group 2:

Group 1: ENG: 101, 102, 103, 104, 105
Group 2: COM: 101, 107; ENG: 110, 219, 223; MCM: 110, 112

Humanities

Select three courses from at least two disciplines:
Art - ART:100, 101, 102, 103, 106, 118, 234 or 254
Communications - COM:114 or 200
English - ENG:201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 222 or 226
French - FRE:101, 102, 103, 104, 115, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207 or 208
German - GER:101, 102, 103, 104, 201, 202, 203, 204 or 206
History - HST:115, 116, 117, 118, 119 or 120
Humanities - HUM:101, 102, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 205, 207 or 208
Mass Communications - MCM:130, 131, 132, 133 or 215
Music - MUS:103, 113, 114, 128, 211, 212
Philosophy - PHL:101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 109 or 111
Spanish - SPA:101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 115, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209 or 210
Theatre - THT:101, 107 or 110

Physical and Biological Sciences

Select two courses, at least one laboratory course:
Laboratory Course - BIO:111, 124, 140 or 141; CHM:101, 102, 105, 106, 201, 210 or 211; GEO:111 or 112; PHY:111, 112, 122, or 223; PSI:107, 108 or 124
Non-laboratory Course - ANT:101; BIO:113, 115, 117, 119, 120, 122, 123 or 142; CHM:206 or 207; GEG:103; GEO:100, 102, 103, 104 or 105; ME:275; PSI:101, 102, 111 or 121

Mathematics

One course required: MTH:155 or 160

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Select three courses from at least two disciplines. (One course must fulfill the Missouri Requirement. See pg. 8.)
Anthropology - ANT:101, 102, 103, 201, 202 or 203
Economics - ECO:102, 140, 151, 152 or 200
Geography - GEG:100, 101, 102, 104, 105 or 106
History - HST:100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 125, 126, 130, 131, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205 or 206
Political Science - PSC:101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 107, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207 or 208
Psychology - PSY:125, 200, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211 or 213
Sociology - SOC:100, 101, 102, 125, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 209, or 211

Note: Courses listed may not be offered at all campuses or during every semester. Courses may be added to the list. Students should contact a counselor or advisor for the latest information.

Note: The general education courses recommended for degrees in Art, Computer Science, Engineering Science, Music and Photography do not meet the Missouri general education transfer guidelines for acceptance as a block by other Missouri public colleges and universities. The courses in these programs are evaluated on a course-by-course basis at institutions offering bachelor's degrees.

(pp. 6-7)

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The current general education program was cited in 1988 by a visiting team from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The visiting team report concluded that "The general education program lacks an articulated philosophy and rationale" (NCA, 1988, p. 18). It is the clear expectation of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools that significant reform in general education would have occurred by the time of the College's next accreditation visit in March, 1998.

St. Louis Community College began its reform movement on November 2, 1995, with the formation of the Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform. Chaired by President Irving Pressley McPhail, Florissant Valley Campus -- a veteran of successful general education reform movements in the private liberal arts college and in private and public research and comprehensive universities -- the Task Force was assigned the following responsibilities:

- answering the fundamental question: "What is the point of general education at St. Louis Community College for the requirements of the 21st Century?"
- reviewing and analyzing the contemporary issues and trends in general education reform in the following disciplines:
  - Arts and Humanities
  - Social and Behavioral Sciences
  - Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Technology
- reviewing and analyzing examples of innovative courses, programs and approaches, including:
  - integrating basic skills development with general education course sequence
  - infusing international and multicultural perspectives
  - improving teaching and learning
  - assessing outcomes
  - integrating general education into transfer and career programs
  - introducing interdisciplinary courses
- defining district vs. campus issues and concerns in sustaining the vitality of general education
- providing interim reports of task force accomplishments to the College community through periodic publication of *General Education Update*
- providing a final report to Chancellor Stephenson in June, 1997

THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE

The Task Force embarked immediately on an ambitious two-year schedule of reading, thinking, debating, conferencing, sharing and reaching consensus on major aspects of curricular reform in liberal learning. Our schedule was as follows:

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
November 2, 1995	Organizational Meeting	Cosand Center
December 1, 1995	The Aims of General Education at SLCC: I	Florissant Valley
December 15, 1995	The Aims of General Education at SLCC: II	Forest Park
January 11-13, 1996	82nd Annual Meeting of AAC&U	Washington, D.C.
January 19, 1996	The Aims of General Education at SLCC: III	Meramec
January 26, 1996	The Aims of General Education at SLCC: IV	Florissant Valley
February 16, 1996	Multicultural Paradigms and Curricular Choices	Forest Park
March 8, 1996	Multicultural Paradigms and Curricular Choices	Meramec
March 22, 1996	Multicultural Paradigms and Curricular Choices	Florissant Valley
March 29, 1996	Arts and Humanities Paradigms and Curricular Choices: I	Forest Park
April 19, 1996	Arts and Humanities Paradigms and Curricular Choices: II	Meramec

May 3, 1996	Social & Behavioral Sciences Paradigms and Curricular Choices: I	Florissant Valley
May 17, 1996	Social & Behavioral Sciences Paradigms and Curricular Choices: II	Forest Park
May 31, 1996	Mathematics, Science, Engineering & Technology Paradigms and Curricular Choices: I	Meramec
June 14, 1996	Mathematics, Science, Engineering & Technology Paradigms and Curricular Choices: II	Florissant Valley
June 21, 1996	Developmental Studies Paradigms and Curricular Choices: I	Forest Park
June 28, 1996	Developmental Studies Paradigms and Curricular Choices: II	Meramec

YEAR TWO (1996-97)

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
September 16, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Distribution Paradigms and Assessment Models: I	Florissant Valley

September 27, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Distribution Paradigms and Assessment Models: II	Forest Park
October 11, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Core Curriculum Paradigms and Assessment Models: I	Meramec
October 15, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Core Curriculum Paradigms and Assessment Models: II	Florissant Valley
November 8, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Learning Community Paradigms and Assessment Models: I	Forest Park
November 15-16, 1996	AAC&U Conference on General Education Reform in Community Colleges	Seattle, Washington
November 22, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Learning Community Paradigms and Assessment Models: II	Meramec
December 6, 1996	Models of General Education Programs: Other Paradigms and Assessment Models	Florissant Valley
December 20, 1996	Meeting with Dr. Robert Stein, CBHE	Forest Park

January 16-19, 1997	83rd Annual Meeting of AAC&U	Atlanta, Georgia
January 31, 1997	Renewing and Sustaining Effective Pedagogy in General Education Courses: I	Meramec
February 7, 1997	Renewing and Sustaining Effective Pedagogy in General Education Courses: II	Florissant Valley
February 21, 1997	Consensus on Preliminary Recommendations	Forest Park
March 7, 1997	Consensus on Preliminary Recommendations	Meramec
April 7-9, 1997	Open Forums on Three Campuses	Florissant Valley Forest Park Meramec
April 18, 1997	Consensus on Final Recommendations	Forest Park
April 19 through mid-May, 1997	Preparation of Final Report	
June 10, 1997	Presentation of Final Report to Chancellor Chancellor's Luncheon for Task Force	Clayton, Missouri
June 23, 1997	Board Presentation on General Education	Cosand Center
September, 1997 and beyond	Approval, Implement- ation and Formative/ Summative Evaluation of New SLCC General Education Program	

FOUR STAGES OF GENERAL EDUCATION PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

The two-year schedule of activities was organized into four stages as follows:

STAGE ONE

The Task Force immersed itself in reading and debating the classic and contemporary literature of the general education reform movement (see Appendix A for required reading list). This knowledge acquisition phase provided the intellectual context for developing the first draft statement of Aim, Knowledge Areas, Skill Areas, and Skill Area Outcomes for General Education. The results of this stage of deliberation were published in General Education Update #1 (February 12, 1996). Open Forums were conducted on all three campuses following dissemination of General Education Update #1.

STAGE TWO

The Task Force was organized into four discipline area sub-committees to consider the following questions: (1) How does the current St. Louis Community College general education curriculum address the discipline area? (2) How do current thinking and curriculum reform efforts impact change in the discipline area? (3) How does General Education Task Force specification of Aim, Knowledge Areas, Skill Areas, and Skill Area Outcomes impact change in process and content in discipline area? and (4) How would the discipline area sub-committee restructure process and content for inclusion in new general education program for St. Louis Community College? The results of this inquiry were published in General Education Update #2 (October 8, 1996), followed by Open Forums on all three campuses.

STAGE THREE

The Task Force engaged in a critical analysis of paradigms and assessment models (distribution, core, learning community, other) and reviewed current innovations in teaching and learning underway on all three campuses that support the renewal and sustenance of effective pedagogy in general education courses. Based on feedback from the first and second series of Open Forums, the Task Force revised the statement of Aim, Knowledge Areas, Skill Areas, and Skill Area Outcomes for General Education. The revised statement was published in General Education Update #3 (February 7, 1997).

STAGE FOUR

The Task Force reached consensus on the paradigm and structure for a new general education program for St. Louis Community College for the new millennium. The tentative proposal for general education reform was published in General Education Update #4 (March 20, 1997). A final series of Open Forums were held on all three campuses.

WHAT FORM OF PARADIGM?

The Task Force considered several alternatives and weighed their advantages and disadvantages. We determined that the Core Curriculum paradigm best fit our comprehensive aims of general education statement. At the same time, we recognized that the diverse needs of our students in a variety of associate degree and certificate program tracks obligated us to preserve some measure of flexibility and options. Consequently, we have undertaken to develop a "Modified Core Curriculum" that includes a set of fundamental courses – ordered, purposive and coherent – and a limited distribution of courses designed to fit the aims of general education at St. Louis Community College for the 21st century. The core curriculum will demonstrate what is possible for a community college to do with a general education program, and it will provide a basis for measuring the effectiveness of our achievement of the aims of general education.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

The Task Force recommends that if this reform proposal is accepted for implementation, all currently existing general education courses will be wiped out. All courses for the new general education program – fundamental courses and distribution courses – will be designed or redesigned by interdisciplinary teams of faculty, and no course will be considered for the new general education program unless that course meets the following set of criteria:

1. General education courses should be college-level courses and not developmental.

2. General education courses should be truly general and not narrow specializations or courses intended for select audiences.

3. General education courses should be foundational and should deal with the fundamental concepts, methods, problems and theories of a discipline, or disciplines in the case of interdisciplinary courses. Upper-level courses that require foundational prerequisites should not be considered general education.

4. General education courses should aim to open the mind, broaden awareness and widen horizons rather than at specific career preparation. They should aim at cultivating the intellect and imagination, at developing general mental

skills rather than vocational skills. In the long run, such general skills constitute the best preparation for any career.

5. General education courses should give the student a perspective, an overall view of a subject or branch of learning, and a substantial amount of essential information, which together with other core courses provide a solid background in the liberal arts and sciences.

6. General education should be desirable for all students as expressed in the degree requirements. Consideration of the purpose of the separate degrees should be taken into account, but impact of the requirements on particular programs ought not to be a guiding principle. Courses designed and adopted by a career program cannot be used to fulfill general education requirements for that same program.

7. General education courses should emphasize written and oral communication, reading, and mathematics across the curriculum.

8. General education courses should emphasize interdisciplinary approaches and connectedness.

9. The review of general education must be an ongoing activity. Opportunities to include new courses, new content, new practices or new configurations for general education must be encouraged.

GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW BOARD

The Task Force recommends that the challenge of administering the development of the core curriculum be given to a new General Education Review Board. This body would report directly to the Vice Chancellor for Education. The membership of this body would include the current faculty members on the Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform and others as determined by the Review Board. The chair of the General Education Review Board would be restricted to one of the current faculty members on the Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform. Membership, including the designation of a chair, would be by appointment of the Chancellor. Following the approval by appropriate governance bodies of newly designed or redesigned courses for the core curriculum, all changes to the general education paradigm and all new general education course proposals would require the approval of the General Education Review Board before moving to campus-level and district-level curriculum committees.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE CORE CURRICULUM

As part of the process of admission to St. Louis Community College, entering students are examined for proficiency in the following three basic skills: reading, writing and mathematics. The Accuplacer Tests in reading, writing and mathematics are district-wide tests. Because the core curriculum as a whole consists of fair but demanding college-level courses, students are normally expected to achieve passing scores on the Accuplacer Tests before beginning core courses. However, the Task Force recognizes the need for flexibility and the likelihood that many students taking developmental courses in one or two areas may be capable of performing successfully in another area of the core curriculum. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that students in developmental courses plan their academic programs (developmental and core curriculum) with a college advisor. Further, the Task Force recommends that all pre-core curriculum basic skills courses be linked with one or more transfer courses, and that a required orientation course be included for all students in the developmental education sequence.

TRANSFER STUDENTS AND THE CORE CURRICULUM

There is great concern among many faculty and staff that any changes made in the current Missouri General Education Requirements will result in transfer students not being protected by the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) policy on credit transfer. The Task Force met with Dr. Robert Stein, Assistant Commissioner, CBHE, on December 20, 1996, to clarify issues related to general education reform and transfer. The following major points were stressed in this meeting:

- Missouri's system of higher education places strong value on local autonomy and institutional distinctiveness while at the same time acknowledging the importance of designing programs that provide for smooth transfer and articulation among institutions.

- St. Louis Community College is to be commended for its commitment to a redesigned general education program that better prepares its students for the next century.

- Whatever changes are made in the program, it is important to do a cross walk between the current 39-hour core that is defined in the CBHE policy on credit transfer and the new program that is introduced.

- Assessment should be built in as early as possible. A strong assessment program will serve the college well in articulating and documenting what students know and are able to do at the completion of their general education program.

- Conversations should occur between St. Louis Community College and its major receiving institutions for transfer students about anticipated changes and how the new program is at least minimally equivalent to the current distribution model.

- There is ample time to work out articulation for all of St. Louis Community College students as any new program will be phased in rather than started immediately. The current thinking is that a new program would not begin until Fall 1999 with the first graduates in 2001.

Dr. Stein encouraged President Henry Shannon, Forest Park Campus, to bring to the CBHE Committee on Transfer and Articulation the issue of general education reform and its relationship to the 39-hour distribution model. President McPhail will address the CBHE Committee on Transfer and Articulation on Monday, June 9, 1997.

CAREER STUDENTS AND THE CORE CURRICULUM

Current AAS, CS and CP programs sample general education courses in a range of 15-credit hours to 38-credit hours. Such a sampling will also be possible in the proposed core curriculum paradigm. Directors of AAS, CS and CP programs will again have the opportunity to determine which components of the core curriculum are most critical and relevant for a specific vocational/occupational program. The Task Force noted with interest the criteria for excellence in AAS degree programs (as adopted in 1987 by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges) which states in part:

- The AAS degree requirements should be limited to 60-72 semester hours or 90-108 quarter credit hours.

- The technical specialty component of the AAS degree should constitute 50% to 75% of the course credits.

- The general education component of AAS degree programs should constitute a minimum of 25% of the course credits with the combination of general education and related studies constituting up to 50% of the course credits.

DEVELOPING THE COURSES

With the acceptance of the Task Force recommendations for a core curriculum, the General Education Review Board will formally solicit course proposals that fit the structure of the core curriculum, that address specific areas of the Aims of General Education, and that meet the criteria and standards of the Principles for Design of General Education Courses. It is expected that many of the courses will be proposed as team-developed and team-taught efforts.

The Task Force recommends that a group of course developers make a commitment to a year-long process of collaborative course building, and that these course developers be offered contracts for released time from their teaching responsibilities or supplemental stipends. This group will meet twice a month throughout the fall and spring semesters to critique each course submitted for review. The Task Force, further, recommends that this group be directed by the chair of the General Education Review Board. (See also Appendix B).

ASSESSMENT PLAN

St. Louis Community College is presently engaged in implementing a comprehensive assessment plan in all areas of the College. The Task Force proposes a macro- and micro-level assessment process to evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum in helping students to achieve the stated Aims of General Education.

At the macro-level, the Task Force recommends that all students complete The Academic Profile published by the Educational Testing Service as an entry assessment and upon completion of Tier Three (Capstone Project) of the core curriculum. The AP measures college-level reading, college-level writing, and critical thinking in the context of material from humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. It also measures mathematics. Available empirical research (see Chen, McClung, & Miller, 1994) suggests that the AP is a useful measure of the academic skills acquired through undergraduate general education courses and that the instrument satisfies the demands of internal and external constituencies for accountability.

The Task Force, further, recommends that all general education courses be evaluated against the specification of Skill Area Outcomes. This micro-level assessment effort will ensure that the Aims of General Education are met.

THE RESULT

The Task Force recommends the acceptance and implementation of a core curriculum organized in three tiers and supported by a visionary statement of Aims of General Education and the specification of Skill Area Outcomes necessary to make our students viable citizens in the global village of the new millennium.

THE AIM OF GENERAL EDUCATION AT ST. LOUIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The purpose of general education at St. Louis Community College is to prepare students to:

1. LIVE EFFECTIVELY by understanding and dealing constructively with the diversity of the contemporary world, a diversity manifested not only in ideas and ways of knowing, but also in populations and cultures;

2. LEARN CONTINUOUSLY by constructing a coherent framework for ongoing intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic growth in the presence of such diversity;

3. WORK PRODUCTIVELY by enlarging their personal and vocational pathways, developing life-long competencies such as critical and creative thinking, effective communication, and abilities to reason quantitatively and engage in substantive problem solving.

GENERAL EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Humanities
Communications
Technology
Mathematics
Aesthetics
Ethical Development
International/Intercultural Perspectives
Wellness
Social Sciences
Behavioral Sciences
Citizenship
Applied Sciences
Natural Sciences/Environment

GENERAL EDUCATION SKILL AREAS

A. Think critically
B. Communicate effectively
C. Interact productively with others
D. Value and practice inquiry
E. Access, analyze, understand, and use information
F. Accept personal responsibility
G. Accept social responsibility
H. Appreciate aesthetic expression

SKILL AREA OUTCOMES

A. THINK CRITICALLY

Definition: Critical thinking is inherent in logical reasoning and problem solving. One must value critical thinking in order to reason logically and solve problems. To think critically, one must understand the context of an idea and how it relates to the whole.

1. Integrate ideas: The student...

a) identifies, organizes, and defines ideas from various sources which are then analyzed and synthesized
b) examines his/her own viewpoint while also interpreting and integrating the ideas and beliefs of people from various cultures
c) presents ideas using correct vocabulary
d) recognizes how small tasks can be combined to perform larger tasks

2. Reflect ethically: The student . . .

a) identifies and analyzes his/her own values
b) questions and critiques personal, societal, and cultural assumptions
c) generates decisions based on rational and ethical analysis
d) evaluates unpopular decisions for their value to the whole
e) explores values related to social, political, economic, scientific, and technological developments

3. Reason logically: The student...

a) recognizes both formal and informal arguments, their premises and conclusions
b) distinguishes inductive from deductive arguments
c) determines the strength or weakness of logical arguments
d) formulates strong arguments
e) examines supporting evidence and determines its relevance to a particular issue
f) considers all sides to an issue or argument, using past experience, logical analysis, and fairness in assessing other viewpoints

4. Solve problems: The student...

a) identifies., researches, and analyzes a problem
b) uses inductive and/or deductive reasoning to solve the problem
c) develops appropriate hypotheses
d) models situations from the real world and uses the models to make predictions and informed decisions
e) uses research, brainstorming, and creativity to formulate and evaluate solutions
f) revises solutions as needed
g) uses past experiences to solve problems, when appropriate
h) uses, values, and evaluates mathematical and quantitative reasoning
i) develops conceptual understanding, decision-making, and analytic skills dealing with quantities, their magnitudes, and interrelationships
j) uses technology as an aid to understanding and as a tool in the solution of problems

B. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Definition: Effective communication requires the ability to accurately and critically utilize reading material, to produce clear and effective writing, to send coherent messages and to perform objective analysis. It also requires observational skills and the ability to effectively receive information. Good communicators know their own strengths and weaknesses in this area.

1. Read effectively: The student...

a) reads actively by previewing, setting goals, modifying approaches, and analyzing / synthesizing key elements
b) recognizes how his experiences, assumptions and values influence *the* comprehension of what is read
c) examines how the author's experiences, assumptions, values, and purposes influence content and structure

2. Write effectively: The student...

a) generates topics, organizes ideas, and produces an initial draft
b) develops a topic in form and style appropriate to the audience, purpose, and content
c) revises written work
d) utilizes skills and resources to produce written work which demonstrates proper grammar, sentence structure, and spelling
e) uses reference citations appropriately
f) utilizes an effective note-taking system
g) summarizes information in clear, coherent terms

3. Send messages effectively: The student...

a) develops messages that are suitable in form and delivery to a particular individual, group, occasion, setting, or purpose
b) recognizes the many variables which influence effective communication: culture, gender, nonverbal symbols, the demands of the setting, changing contingencies, etc., and demonstrates adaptability and flexibility
c) expresses ideas, opinions, and feelings politely and ethically with clarity and efficiency, using appropriate verbal/ nonverbal channels to achieve goals
d) obtains feedback in an appropriate manner: asking questions, paraphrasing, etc., and adjusts her communication based on feedback from others
e) demonstrates appropriate and effective leadership and membership behaviors
f) identifies and evaluates his and others' strengths and weaknesses as communicators

4. Receive messages effectively: The student...

a) identifies, paraphrases, and evaluates the main ideas in a message
b) selects effective receiving behaviors based on the particular communication context and demonstrates involvement and responsiveness
c) recognizes that she may interpret a message in a way that is different from that intended by the sender
d) follows instructions
e) understands and evaluates various communication methods and technologies
f) identifies the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of communication

C. INTERACT PRODUCTIVELY WITH OTHERS

Definition: Productive interaction requires that we appreciate and accept each person's individuality, foster cooperation, constructively solve conflicts, view others in a positive light, encourage self-awareness, adapt to a fluid social environment, and use all of the above to work productively in a group.

The student...

a) shows respect for others
b) associates willingly with others in order to meet social and task goals
c) understands, values, and respects differences
d) accepts responsibility for his own behaviors
e) recognizes the interdependence of the global community
f) demonstrates the ability to live and work in a diverse society
g) recognizes when interaction is appropriate
h) uses self and group criticism to achieve desired outcomes and goals
i) evaluates roles and performance during group activities
j) raises issues and conflicts effectively and appropriately, as well as resolves conflicts
k) integrates appropriate techniques into group activities to enhance interaction and achieve goals

D. VALUE AND PRACTICE INQUIRY

Definition: Inquiry is not only seeking information, but looking beyond the question at hand to seek new questions.

The student...

a) formulates and evaluates questions
b) looks for innovative and creative approaches
c) respects the questions of others
d) gives and receives constructive criticism
e) understands and values the role of life-long learning

E. ACCESS, ANALYZE, UNDERSTAND, AND USE INFORMATION

Definition: Information is stored in a variety of formats and locations. One must understand the need for information and have the ability to identify what type of information is needed before one can access, evaluate and effectively use information for life-long learning.

The student...

a) understands how information and information sources are identified, defined, and structured
b) evaluates sources and information in terms of quality, currency, usefulness, and truthfulness
c) understands the variety of ways information sources are physically organized and accessed
d) incorporates a variety of tools to search for necessary information
e) uses technology to access, retrieve, and communicate information
f) uses gathered information for planned purposes

F. ACCEPT PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Definition: Responsibility requires a balance among the intellectual, physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of self, and compels one to act upon consequent convictions.

The student...

a) develops a process of self-assessment for personal understanding
b) defines and maintains a well-rounded self
c) establishes the self as the locus of control
d) establishes personal goals
e) formulates a code of ethics
f) understands the importance of physical and emotional well-being

G. ACCEPT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Definition: Liberal learning nurtures the capabilities for transforming human culture through inculcating a commitment to positive change, ethical development and the betterment of society and its communities.

The student...

a) thinks and acts in ways that manifest positive human development
b) acts in an ethical manner
c) thinks about and participates in activities that promote human and social development
d) states and understands the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
e) identifies ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
f) demonstrates an understanding of ethical principles (duties/ dilemmas) and their impact on society
g) recognizes the diversity of political and social motivations
h) commits to positive change, ethical development, and the betterment of society by proposing courses of action to address social and political issues

H. UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE AESTHETIC EXPRESSION

Definition: The many forms of art are personal and social expressions of how we organize and understand the world. They reveal values, perspectives, and stereotypes of self and others. The arts can entertain, edify, and exalt; they can construct our identity as both unique individuals and as members of a group; they can reinforce or challenge beliefs, values, and behaviors.

The student . . .

a) articulates her responses to a variety of artistic expressions
b) identifies and uses criteria to form aesthetic judgments
c) identifies and evaluates the influence of the arts
d) identifies roles, purposes, functions, and values of artistic expressions

TIER ONE
[22-23 Credit Hours]

ASSESSMENT

ENG: 101
(3-credit hours)

MTH: 155 or 160
(4-credit hours)

Humanities Elective
(3-4 credit hours)

Oral Communications I
(3-credit hours)

PRD: 108/Orientation
(1-credit hour)

Missouri Requirement Course
(3-credit hours)

Technology and the Human Condition

or

Introduction to Word Processing, Spreadsheets, and Graphics

(3-credit hours)

Health, Wellness, and Introduction to Physical Education

(2-credit hours)

***May also be completed at Tier Two**

TIER TWO
[21-23 credit hours]

Studies in Non-Western Culture

and/or

Studies in American Ethnic Minority Culture (Including Sensitivity to the Role of Language) (4-credit hours)

Linked With

Topics in Composition II

- **Language Awareness**
- **Multiple Perspectives (1.5 credit hours)**
- **Research**

and

Topics in Oral Communications II

Communication Among Cultures (1.5 credit hours)

Aspects of Science I
Includes lectures and labs in Chemistry and Biology (4-credit hours)

These courses may be taken in two modules of two credit hours each

Linked With

Topics in Composition II

- **Logic/Critical Thinking (1.5 credit hours)**
- **Research**

and

Topics in Oral Communications II

Small Group/Leadership/Membership Discussions (1.5 credit hours)

TIER TWO
[continued]

Aspects of Science II
Includes lectures and lab in
Physics and Physical Sciences
(4-credit hours)

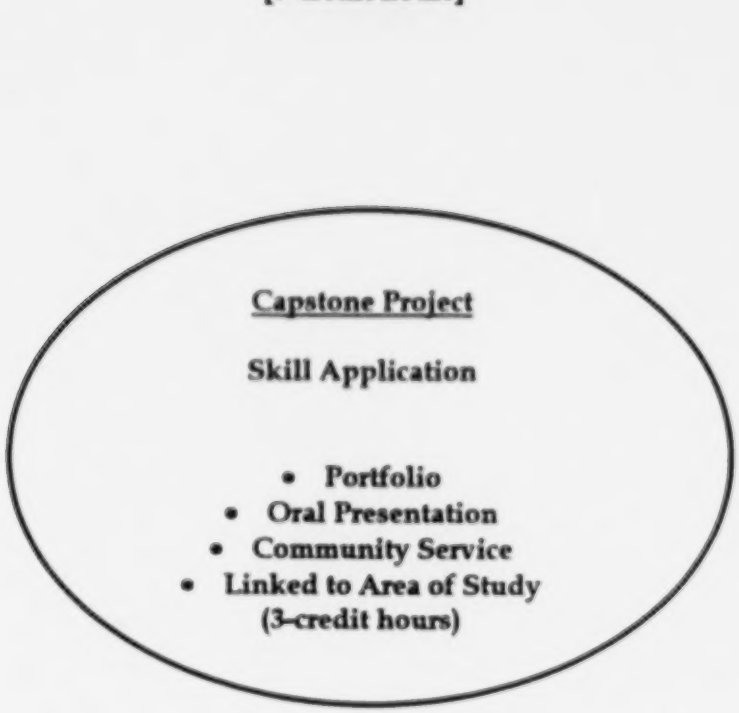
- **These courses may be taken in two modules of two credit hours each**
- **Physical Sciences may include Geology and Astronomy**

Social Science
or
Behavioral Science
or
Business Elective
(3-credit hours)

Health, Wellness, and
Introduction to Physical
Education
(2-credit hours)

- **May also be completed at Tier One**

TIER THREE
[3-credit hours]



TOTAL GENERAL EDUCATION COURSEWORK
[46-47 credit hours]

Although the increase of seven to eight credit hours is a significant change from the current general education requirement, the additional hours will impact students in a meaningful and positive way – helping them to be more effective and independent learners. In addition, each of the previously stated goals and objectives regarding skill areas, knowledge areas, and desired outcomes is addressed. Even with the additional hours, virtually every program can remain within the current 64 to 70 credit hours shown in our current catalog (17-24 credit hours remain for course work in the major field and a choice of electives).

SUMMARY

The Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform has fulfilled its charge. We have provided everyone connected with the thrust of general education at St. Louis Community College an Aims statement representing a philosophical description of what we ought to be about, and a recommended curriculum designed to achieve these aims in a structured, coherent, and purposeful manner.

We believe that the overarching aim of any general education program should be the development of the learner along the lines we view as beneficial to our society and compatible with the goals of living effectively, learning continuously, and working productively. We know that change will be a constant in the lives of our students, and we believe that liberal education has the power not only to prepare our students to deal perceptively with these changes, but to encourage our students to contribute to and direct these changes, particularly as they pertain to their yearning to lead thoughtful, committed lives.

Students need an orientation, essential knowledge, and the requisite skills to think critically, communicate effectively, interact productively with others, value and practice inquiry, access, analyze, understand, and use information; accept personal responsibility, accept social responsibility, and understand and appreciate aesthetic expression. They need, also, to be encouraged and supported to become mature, autonomous individuals.

If every general education course is designed in both its content and methodology to develop the Aims we recommend and to contribute in its own way to the important insights, essential knowledge and required skills or competencies that support that point of view, then the development of the learner can become the common concern of all faculty who participate in the general education courses. The core curriculum is one way of promoting this overarching aim of higher education and achieving the expected outcomes of the learning college.

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APPENDIX A

TASK FORCE REQUIRED READING

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APPENDIX B

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING CORE CURRICULUM

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 1.0 To approve Chancellor's Task Force on General Education Reform (CTFGER) recommendation for a Core Curriculum by 11/1/97

Action Steps	Accountability		Schedule		Resources		Feedback Mechanisms
	Primary	Others	Start	Complete	Dollars	Time	
1. Define approval process for Core Curriculum recommendation	Chancellor	-----	6/17/97	6/30/97	-----	5 hours	1. Open communication to College community
2. Implement approval process for Core Curriculum recommendation	Chancellor	.Board of Trustees .District Govern-ance .Campus Govern-ance	8/15/97	11/1/97	-----	2 1/2 mos.	2. Minutes of meetings documenting approval process
3. Announce approval of CTFGER recommendation for a Core Curriculum	Chancellor	-----	11/1/97	-----	-----	-----	3. Open communication to College community

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 2.0 To design courses for Core Curriculum by 12/1/98.

Action Steps	Accountability		Schedule		Resources		Feedback Mechanisms
	Primary	Others	Start	Complete	Dollars	Time	
1. Appoint General Education Review Board (GERB)	Chancellor	CTFGER	8/1/97	8/15/97	-----	-----	1. Open communication to College community
2. Appoint course developers	GERB	Vice Chancellor for Education (VCE)	11/1/97	12/1/97	$35,000 (10@ $3,500 each)	-----	2. Course developers under contract for 12 months (1/1/98-1/1/99)
3. Solicit course proposals	GERB	VCE	1/1/98	9/1/98	-----	8 mos.	3. Fully-developed set of courses w/complete units ready for presentation to campus/ district curriculum committees
4. Submit core curriculum courses as a package to campus/district curriculum committees	GERB	VCE	9/1/98	11/1/98	-----	2 mos.	4. Core curriculum courses approved by campus/district curriculum committees

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 2.0 (Continued) To design courses for Core Curriculum by 12/1/98

Action Steps	Accountability		Schedule		Resources		Feedback Mechanisms
	Primary	Others	Start	Complete	Dollars	Time	
5. Submit core curriculum courses as a package to Board of Trustees for final approval	Chancellor	VCE	11/1/98	12/1/98	-----	1 month	5. Core curriculum courses approved
6. Implement core curriculum	.GERB .Faculty	.VCE .Academic Advisors .Academic Deans .Academic Dept. Chairs	1/1/99	Ongoing	-----	-----	6. Formative and summative evaluation documents on file

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE 3.0: To complete new general education transfer agreements with major receiving institutions by 12/1/99.

Action Steps	*Accountability*		Schedule		Resources		Feedback Mechanisms
	Primary	Others	Start	Complete	Dollars	Time	
1. Complete "cross walk" between current 39-hour distribution model and new core curriculum model	*GERB*	VCE	9/1/97	11/1/97	-----	-----	1. Equivalencies established for new core curriculum model w/39-hour distribution model
2. Complete discussions with major receiving institutions on how core curriculum is at least minimally equivalent to current 39-hour distribution model	.Academic Advisors .Acad Deans .Acad Dept. Chairs .Faculty	VCE	11/1/97	11/1/98	-----	12 mos.	2. Minutes of meetings with major receiving institutions
3. Complete formal articulation agreements in general education with major receiving institutions	VCE	.GERB .Academic Advisors .Acad Deans .Academic Dept. Chairs .Faculty	12/1/98	12/1/99	-----	12 mos.	3. Formal articulation agreements signed and on file